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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9609  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N541// PRIORITY  
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RHMFIUU/USFJ PRIORITY  
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 1551  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 3908  
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 9493  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 2117  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 5342  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6922  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2659  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2941  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3014  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS TOKYO 003459

SIPDIS

STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,  
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;  
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;  
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CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;  
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - OPEC, CARIBBEAN-LATIN AMERICA  
SUMMIT, AND NORTH KOREA

11. LEAD STORIES: Top stories on Friday morning included the likelihood that Toyota will post an operating loss in the current business year ending in March for the first time in half a century.

12. "Plunging Prices No Excuse Not to Curb Reliance on Oil" On OPEC's decision to slash oil production, the liberal Tokyo Shimbun editorialized (12/19): "While the IAEA predicts that petroleum will continue to be a major source of energy, we need to be prepared for a possible shortage of oil. Concurrently, there have been calls to halve the emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020. Whenever oil becomes cheaper, the enthusiasm for reducing dependence on it plummets. We need to remember that the plunge in petroleum prices in the 1980s hampered the development of energy-conservation technologies."

13. "Cutback in Production Reflects Frustration on Producers' Part" The business-oriented Nikkei stated in an editorial (12/19): "...Additional cuts in oil production represent frustration on the part of oil producers.... Plunging oil prices and the ongoing financial crisis have slowed new investment in energy-resource development. A delay or stalemate in investment might hamstring energy supplies in the future, resulting in a surge in petroleum prices. It must be recognized that an excess fall in oil prices is not desirable."

14. "Creation of Latin America-Caribbean Coalition" On an agreement by Latin American and Caribbean leaders to create a new regional framework in 2010 that excludes the U.S., the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri wrote from Rio (12/19): "With the participants having different motives, it remains to be seen whether the new regional mechanism will be launched as committed. Central American countries appear to be anxious to call attention to their presence during the transition period for the incoming Obama

administration.... The accord for a new regional framework points to Washington's waning influence in Latin America, which has been called America's 'backyard'"

15. "DPRK Report on Terror Plot Meant to Apply Pressure on ROK"  
Concerning a DPRK media story that police there have foiled a plot to assassinate Kim Jong Il, a correspondent for the conservative Sankei speculated from Seoul (12/19): "...North Korea has been ratcheting up tensions with the Lee administration in Seoul. One view holds that Pyongyang is doing this by claiming the existence of a terror plot masterminded by South Korean spies."

ZUMWALT